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Christian faith, acquired Christian ikons, but did not want to part with their Shamanist idols. The same can be observed among other Far Eastern and Far Northern aborigines. Many Christian converts wear crosses around their necks, but, at the same time, have idols made of walrus bones and reindeer skin on their belts. Naturally the communists have thrown ridicule on this pagan-Christian dualism, which they have described as 'Shamanism-Orthodoxy', but it is an unavoidable transitory stage in the religious development of any primitive people. Certain sections of the northern tribes of Soviet Russia had been sufficiently Christianized at the time of the establishment of Soviet power to resent the forcible withdrawal of priests, and the removal from forests and ways of crosses which, in the popular belief gave protection against 'devils'. A protest lodged by a group of natives of the Beryozovo district in North-western Siberia was characteristic in this respect. The natives in question wrote a letter complaining that the local communist secretary did not allow them to have a priest. Their actual words were: We can't do without a priest because this is our faith.' ('My ne mozhem bez popa potomu chto vera nasha takaya'.) The letter of protest was printed in 1934 in *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, the official organ of the Soviet of Nationalities as a general illustration of the fact that priests still enjoyed confidence in certain parts of the Far North.*

Today most of the Far Eastern tribes are outside the reach of those reduced activities which are still permitted to the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.S.R. Whilst churches are tolerated in old towns where their existence is traditional, it has been the consistent policy of the Soviet Government not to allow Christian houses of worship to be erected in the so-called 'socialist cities' which are the products of the Soviet period. In the Far East this applies to Magadan and Komsomolsk, places which among their polyglot population count quite a number of detribalized natives. Members of the two larger nationalities of the Soviet Far East, Yakuts and Buryat-Mongols, are, as far as they are converts to Christianity, in a better position than the members of the smaller tribes. There are churches in the capitals of Yakutia and Buryat-Mongolia and presumably also in other localities of these Republics. These are under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Irkutsk and Chita, whose diocese is larger than the whole of Western Europe.

STALIN – THE SUN

Against Shamanism and Christianity the Soviet régime uses one and the same metaphysical antidote – the Lenin-Stalin cult. In the territories of the Far Eastern tribes this cult has a particularly colourful variant. It takes the form of folk-tales which depict Lenin and Stalin as 'super-

* *Revolyutsiya i Natsionalnosti*, Nr 53, July 1934, pp. 51–57.

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shamans' fighting and exterminating the 'evil spirits'. Lenin and Stalin appear in these 'folk-tales' as legendary heroes, as eagles liberating the people from the 'bad black kite' (a Tunguz folk-tale), and, in particular, as something approaching 'sun-gods'.

It is understandable that the idea of the sun must have a powerful appeal for peoples living in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Everything associated with the sun is good, wonderful and divine. The Soviet régime has made ample use of this. The Soviet literary journal *Zvezda* rightly said that several volumes could be compiled from all the legends, stories, tales and songs in which Lenin and Stalin are depicted as heroes who gave to the people of the North the inextinguishable sun.[34] Typical of this 'sun literature' produced for the Far Eastern aborigines is the Nanai folk-tale – *Sun of the People*; – 'and there came a time when a hero (who, although living far away from the Nanai people, saw and knew everything) took the sun into his hands, and turned it in such a way that its warmest rays shone where it was dark, and where down-trodden peoples were suffering. And they then knew well-being, warmth and happiness. The name of the hero was Lenin. When a great disaster befell the earth – when Lenin died – bad people were pleased. They thought that the sun would stop shedding its light on the people, but their glee was shorter than the space of a minute, because the people's sun was guarded by another hero. He is the nearest friend and companion of Lenin, and his name is Stalin. Nobody can equal the strength of that hero. His eyes see everything that goes on on earth. His ears hear everything that people say. His brain knows all that people think. His heart contains the happiness and the woe of all peoples. The depth of his thought is as deep as the ocean. His voice is heard by all that inhabit the earth. Such is the greatest of the very greatest in the whole world. And he took the sun out of Lenin's hands, and lifted it very high. And since then happiness shines on earth, because it is impossible for the sun not to shine.'[35]

The same motif as in the Nanai tale *The Sun of the People* is to be found, with slight variations, in the poems and tales produced for the benefit of the other small ethnic groups of the Far East and Far North.

Something could be said even in favour of the Soviet 'sun' propaganda in as far as it banned the fear of 'evil spirits'. Unfortunately, the Soviet régime has replaced the fear of the spirits by the fear of its own power and the institutions and bogies which it has created. One of them is the wicked foreigner, always ready to attack the natives with the most ghastly and devastating weapons.